Amendments To Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1.   (currently amended): A method for facilitating the distribution of travel-related information, comprising:

communicating with a customer over a computer network having a destination expert server, wherein the destination expert server includes an answer database;

determining a destination expert to which a plurality of requests from a plurality of customers are forwarded by the destination expert server, wherein the destination expert is knowledgeable of a particular destination;

presenting an offer related to the particular destination to the customer;

~~compiling offer data regarding the most frequently requested destination on information stored in the answer database relating to a subset of customer requests, wherein the offer data is used to select an offer relevant to the offer data for presentation to the customer;~~

identifying a plurality of experts, wherein the plurality of experts are in selective communication with the destination expert server;

receiving, from the customer, a request comprising at least one of: customer data and destination question data, wherein the request is received by the destination expert server and, wherein the request is related to a desire of the customer to create travel plans;

associating the customer data with the destination question data and storing the association in the answer database, wherein said answer database includes a plurality of travel answers previously provided by said plurality of experts;

~~facilitating a selection, based on the request, of a destination expert from the plurality of experts, wherein the destination expert has particular knowledge about the destination city;~~

~~forwarding, by the destination expert server, the request to the destination expert to facilitate the destination expert to communicate with the customer to provide a response to the request;~~

parsing the request to determine when the request includes destination question data;

determining whether the request is formatted to enable an automatic search of the answer database;

when the request is formatted to enable an automatic search of the answer database:

automatically retrieving an answer database response to the request from the answer database, wherein the retrieving step is performed automatically by said destination expert server without intervention by the destination expert and the customer, an answer to the customer request, such that the destination expert answer database response includes the a retrieved answer and a proposed itinerary relating to the customer request, ;

when the request is not formatted to enable an automatic search of the answer database:

facilitating a selection, based on the request, of the destination expert from the plurality of experts, wherein the destination expert has particular knowledge about the destination city;

forwarding, by the destination expert server, the request to the destination expert to facilitate the destination expert to communicate with the customer to provide a response to the request;

sending the request to the destination expert to obtain a destination expert response including a proposed itinerary, wherein the proposed itinerary is based upon the particular knowledge of the destination expert related to the destination city, and wherein the destination expert response further includes an offer to book reservations for the proposed itinerary; and

providing at least one of: the answer database response and the destination expert response to the customer;

enabling an interactive session between the destination expert and the customer to facilitate the destination expert interactively processing travel reservation requests from the customer.

2.   (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein facilitating selection of a destination expert comprises selecting a destination expert from among the plurality of experts, wherein the destination expert is located in the destination city.

3.   (original) The method of claim 2, wherein communicating with the customer over the computer network includes receiving a credit card number from the customer.

Claim 4 (canceled).

5.   (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising receiving the destination expert response from the destination expert and forwarding the destination expert response to the customer.

Claim 6 (canceled).

7.   (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising monitoring communications of the destination expert server.

8.   (currently amended) A system for accepting and responding to a customer request for travel information relating to a destination city, comprising:

a destination expert server configured to determine a destination expert to which a plurality of requests from a plurality of customers are forwarded by the destination expert server, wherein the destination expert is knowledgeable of a particular destination;

the destination expert server configured to presenting an offer related to the particular destination to the customer;

a destination expert server configured to compile offer data regarding the most frequently requested destination based on information stored in an answer database relating to a subset of customers, wherein the offer data is used to select an offer relevant to the offer data for presentation to said customer;

the destination expert server configured to receive a request comprising at least one of: customer data and destination question data from a customer for information relating to the destination city, to associate the customer data with the destination question data, and to store the association in the answer database;

the destination expert server configured to parse said request to determine when the request includes destination question data;

the destination expert server configured to determine whether the request is formatted to enable an automatic search of the answer database;

when the request is formatted to enable an automatic search of the answer database:

~~a plurality of experts in selective communication with the destination expert server, wherein the destination expert server forwards the customer request to a selected destination expert from among the plurality of experts, and wherein the destination expert has particular knowledge about the destination city, such that the destination expert can communicate with the customer to provide a response to the customer request, wherein the destination expert server~~ the destination expert server configured to automatically ~~retrieves~~ retrieve an answer database response to the request from the answer database, wherein the retrieving step is performed automatically by said destination expert server without intervention by the destination expert and the customer, such that the answer database response includes ~~the~~ a retrieved answer and a proposed itinerary; ~~relating to the customer request~~

when the request is not formatted to enable an automatic search of the answer database:

the destination expert server configured to facilitate a selection, based on the request, of the destination expert from the plurality of experts, wherein the destination expert has particular knowledge about the destination city;

the destination expert server configured to forward the request to the destination expert to facilitate the destination expert to communicate with the customer to provide a response to the request;

the destination expert server configured to send the request to the destination expert to obtain a destination expert response including a proposed itinerary, wherein the proposed itinerary is based upon the

particular knowledge of the destination expert related to the destination city, and wherein the destination expert response further includes an offer to book reservations for the proposed itinerary;

the destination expert server configured to provide at least one of: the answer database response and the destination expert response to the customer; and,

wherein the destination expert server enables an interactive session between the destination expert and the customer to facilitate the destination expert interactively processing travel reservation requests from the customer.

9.　(original)　The system of claim 8, wherein the customer provides the destination expert server with customer contact information, and wherein the customer contact information is forwarded by the destination expert server to the destination expert.

10.　(original)　The system of claim 8, wherein the destination expert is located in the destination city.

11.　(original)　The system of claim 8, wherein the destination expert server is accessible to the customer via the internet.

12.　(original)　The system of claim 10, wherein the plurality of experts are in selective communication with the destination expert server via electronic mail.

13.　(currently amended)　A computer-readable storage medium encoded with processing instructions for implementing a method for facilitating the distribution of travel-related information, the processing instructions directing a computer to perform the steps of:

communicating with a customer over a computer network having a destination expert server, wherein the destination expert server includes an answer database;

determining a destination expert to which a plurality of requests from a plurality of customers are forwarded by the destination expert server, wherein the destination expert is knowledgeable of a particular destination;

presenting an offer related to the particular destination to the customer;

compiling offer data regarding the most frequently requested destination on information stored in the answer database relating to a subset of customer requests, wherein the offer data is used to select an offer relevant to the offer data for presentation to the customer;

identifying a plurality of experts, wherein the plurality of experts are in selective communication with the destination expert server;

receiving, from the customer, a request comprising at least one of: customer data and destination question data, wherein the request is received by the destination expert server and, wherein the request is related to a desire of the customer to create travel plans;

associating the customer data with the destination question data and storing the association in the answer database, wherein said answer database includes a plurality of travel answers previously provided by said plurality of experts;

~~facilitating a selection, based on the request, of a destination expert from the plurality of experts, wherein the destination expert has particular knowledge about the destination city;~~

~~forwarding, by the destination expert server, the request to the destination expert to facilitate the destination expert to communicate with the customer to provide a response to the request;~~

parsing the request to determine when the request includes destination question data;

determining whether the request is formatted to enable an automatic search of the answer database;

when the request is formatted to enable an automatic search of the answer database:

automatically retrieving an answer database response to the request from the answer database, wherein the retrieving step is performed automatically by said destination expert server without intervention by the destination expert and the customer, ~~an answer to the customer request,~~ such that the ~~destination expert~~ answer database response includes ~~the~~ a retrieved answer and a proposed itinerary ~~relating to the customer request,~~ ;

when the request is not formatted to enable an automatic search of the answer database:

facilitating a selection, based on the request, of the destination expert from the plurality of experts, wherein the destination expert has particular knowledge about the destination city;

forwarding, by the destination expert server, the request to the destination expert to facilitate the destination expert to communicate with the customer to provide a response to the request;

sending the request to the destination expert to obtain a destination expert response including a proposed itinerary, wherein the proposed itinerary is based upon the particular knowledge of the destination expert related to the destination city, and wherein the destination expert response further includes an offer to book reservations for the proposed itinerary;

~~and~~

providing at least one of: the answer database response and the destination expert response to the customer;

enabling an interactive session between the destination expert and the customer to facilitate the destination expert interactively processing travel reservation requests from the customer.

14. (previously presented) The computer-readable storage medium of claim 13, wherein the processing instructions for directing a computer to perform the step of facilitating selection of a destination expert comprises processing instructions for directing the computer to perform the step of selecting a destination expert from among the plurality of experts, and wherein the destination expert is located in the destination city.

15. (original) The computer-readable storage medium of claim 14, wherein the processing instructions for directing a computer to perform the step of communicating with the customer comprise processing instructions for directing a computer to perform the step of communicating with the customer over the computer network, wherein communicating with the customer over the computer network includes receiving a credit card number from the customer.

Claim 16 (canceled).

17. (original) The computer-readable storage medium of claim 14, wherein the processing instructions further direct the computer to perform the step of receiving the

destination expert response from the destination expert and forwarding the destination expert response to the customer.

18. (previously presented) The computer-readable storage medium of claim 14, wherein the processing instructions further direct the computer to perform the step of facilitating a transaction with the customer, wherein the transaction relates to the request.

19. (original) The computer-readable storage medium of claim 14, wherein the processing instructions further direct the computer to perform the step of monitoring communications of the destination expert server.

20. (currently amended) A device for enabling customers to access experts located in cities to which the customers may wish to travel, where the experts can answer customer questions and book travel arrangements for the customers, comprising:

> a processor;

> a storage device in communication with the processor via a system bus, wherein the storage device, and

> a memory connected to the processor, the memory including an operating system for storing a program to control the operation of the processor, and a destination expert control module,

> wherein the processor is operative with the destination expert control module to:

> communicate with a customer over a computer network having a destination expert server, wherein the destination expert server includes an answer database;

> determine a destination expert to which a plurality of requests from a plurality of customers are forwarded by the destination expert server, wherein the destination expert is knowledgeable of a particular destination;

> present an offer related to the particular destination to the customer;

> ~~compile offer data regarding the most frequently requested destination on information stored in the answer database relating to a subset of customer requests, wherein the offer data is used to select an offer relevant to the offer data for presentation to the customer;~~

> identify a plurality of experts, wherein the plurality of experts are in selective communication with the destination expert server;

receive, from the customer, a request comprising <u>at least one of:</u> customer data and destination question data, wherein the request is received by the destination expert server <u>and, wherein the request is related to a desire of the customer to create travel plans</u>;

associate the customer data with the destination question data and storing the association in the answer database<u>, wherein said answer database includes a plurality of travel answers previously provided by said plurality of experts</u>;

~~facilitate a selection, based on the request, of a destination expert from the plurality of experts, wherein the destination expert has particular knowledge about the destination city;~~

~~forward, by the destination expert server, the request to the destination expert to facilitate the destination expert to communicate with the customer to provide a response to the request;~~

<u>parse the request to determine when the request includes destination question data</u>;

<u>determine whether the request is formatted to enable an automatic search of the answer database</u>;

<u>when the request is formatted to enable an automatic search of the answer database</u>:

automatically retrieve <u>an answer database response to the request</u> from the answer database, <u>wherein the retrieving step is performed automatically by said destination expert server</u> without intervention by the destination expert <u>and the customer</u>, ~~an answer to the customer request,~~ such that the ~~destination expert~~ <u>answer database</u> response includes ~~the~~ <u>a</u> retrieved answer and a proposed itinerary ~~relating to the customer request,~~ ~~;~~

<u>when the request is not formatted to enable an automatic search of the answer database</u>:

<u>facilitate a selection, based on the request, of the destination expert from the plurality of experts, wherein the destination expert has particular knowledge about the destination city</u>;

forward, by the destination expert server, the request to the
destination expert to facilitate the destination expert to communicate with
the customer to provide a response to the request;

send the request to the destination expert to obtain a destination
expert response including a proposed itinerary, wherein the proposed
itinerary is based upon the particular knowledge of the destination expert
related to the destination city, and wherein the destination expert response
further includes an offer to book reservations for the proposed itinerary;
~~and~~

provide at least one of: the answer database response and the destination expert
response to the customer;

enable an interactive session between the destination expert and the customer to facilitate
the destination expert interactively processing travel reservation requests from the customer.

21.   (original) The device of claim 20, wherein the identification of a plurality of
experts comprises confirming that the destination expert is familiar with the destination city.

22.   (original) The device of claim 20, wherein communicating with the customer
over the computer network includes receiving a credit card number from the customer.

Claim 23 (canceled).

24.   (original) The device of claim 20, wherein the processor is further operative with
the destination expert control module to receiving the destination expert response from the
destination expert and forward the destination expert response to the customer.

25.   (previously presented) The method of claim 20, wherein the processor is further
operative with the destination expert control module to facilitate a transaction with the customer,
wherein the transaction relates to the request.

26.   (original) The method of claim 20, wherein the processor is further operative
with the destination expert control module to monitor communications of the destination expert
server.

Claim 27 (canceled).

28.   (previously presented) The method of claim 1, further including the step of
transmitting the automatically retrieved answer to the customer.

Claim 29 (canceled).

30.   (previously presented) The computer-readable storage medium of claim 13, wherein the processing instructions for directing a computer to perform further include the step of transmitting the automatically retrieved answer to the customer.

Claim 31 (canceled).

32.   (previously presented) The device of claim 20, wherein the processor is operative with the destination expert control module to transmit the automatically retrieved answer to the customer.

33.   (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the customer is a new customer such that the destination expert server did not previously include new customer information, and the database relating to the subset of customers includes answers previously provided to pre-existing customers.